

that the references have been considered by initialing next to each citation, signing the form and returning a copy of the Form to the undersigned.

With regard to the drawings, being filed herewith is a Letter to the Examiner Requesting Approval of Changes to the Drawings. The Letter to the Examiner requests that English language legends be used in Figs. 4 and 5. The Letter to the Examiner further requests that the inconsistency noted by the Examiner in Fig. 2 be corrected and that Figs. 11-14 be labelled as prior art. Also filed herewith is a Letter to the Official Draftsperson to Submit Formal Drawings. The Examiner is requested to forward the Letter to the Official Draftsperson along with the formal drawings so that the drawings will be reviewed before the application is allowed. Note that the formal drawings being submitted herewith include the changes requested in the Letter to the Examiner.

Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph for indefiniteness. The claims have been amended to address the matters noted by the Examiner and to further improve form. It is submitted to be self evident as to how the indefiniteness rejection is addressed.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,298,249 to Gloor et al. Gloor et al. discloses an optical system employing a light control element which has projections with slopes capable of generating diffused light. However, in Gloor et al., the diffusion occurs on the emitting side of the light control element. To the contrary, independent claims 1 and 4 have been amended to recite that the light control element has projections with slopes to generate diffused light passing through

the light control element toward a light emitting side thereof. This results in a rich variation in a direction of light passing through roots inside the control element. The emitting side of the light control element is thereby illuminated uniformly from inside, and the illumination has an improved appearance. In view of this deficiency, it is submitted that the anticipated rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,600,455 to Ishikawa et al. Ishikawa et al. discloses a surface light source in which light is supplied from a side. The surface light source has a light control element with projections. The projections have slopes capable of generating diffused light. However, like Gloor et al., the diffusion occurs on the emitting side of the light source element. Accordingly, the device disclosed in Ishikawa et al. does not provide the rich variation in the direction of light passing the roots of the light control element. Accordingly, the present invention provides more uniform illumination. Because Ishikawa et al. does not disclose or suggest a light control element having slopes to generate diffused light passing through the light control element toward the light emitting surface, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 4-6 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious over Japanese Patent Publication No. 63-206701 to Kaneko et al. in view of Gloor et al. or Ishikawa et al. Kaneko et al. discloses a surface light source device in which light is introduced from light source 1 through a wedge-like photoconductor 10. However, the device does not have a light control element. Element 4 disposed along the wedge-like photoconductor 10 is a light

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diffusion plate as disclosed in the English language abstract. Even if one were to substitute the device disclosed in Gloor et al. or Ishikawa et al. for the light diffusion plate 4, the present invention would not result. That is, the claims require the light control element to generate diffused light passing through the light control element toward the light emitting sides. To the contrary, this feature would not have been obvious, regardless of how the references are combined. Accordingly, it is submitted that the obviousness rejection should be withdrawn.


There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that affect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

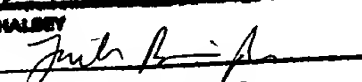
STAAS & HALSEY

By: 
Mark J. Henry
Registration No. 36,162

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8(a)

700 Eleventh Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 434-1500

Date: Feb. 17, 1997

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